The Application of Public Participation to create the Cultural Tourism Map

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Abstract

Trat's old town, located along Bang Phra Canal, has been the original town center since the reign of King Rama I to King Rama V. People in the community agree to preserve and restore many architectural heritages that have been found in this area. Other than that, there are many other interesting cultural and historical sites worth enough to visit in Trat's old town. However, there is no publicity in various forms, such as maps or brochures, to be used as a travel guide by tourists. Therefore, Trat's old town has been receiving lower attention from tourists than many other islands in the province. For this reason, this study aimed to first explore the identity of the town for a mascot's design to initiate the theme of the cultural tourism map for Trat's old town and secondly to design the cultural tourism map for old Trat's town, both through the public participation process. To collect data, a literature review and interviewing methods were used. The samplings included 12 focus groups, which comprised Thai and foreign tourists of different age ranges and genders. Finally, the finding shows that the best-representing mascot of the Trat's old town community is "the happy grandmother and grandfather." The design of the cultural tourism map thus consists of a cover that illustrates a picture of the happy grandmother and grandfather. The map is colored green, brown, and beige to create friendly hospitality along with the wood color of old buildings in Trat's old town and is in an "A3" size for ease of use and portability. The 5-fold leaflet was derived from the focus group interview of the sampling.

Keywords: Trat's Old Town, Trat identity, color scheme, Cultural Tourism Map, Community Participation

1. Introduction

Rak Klong Bang Phra or Trat's old town community, so-called "Chiang Khan of the eastern land" (Paiduaykan.com, 2015) by foreign tourists, received the Outstanding Community Tourism Award in 2007. In the past, it was the main transportation route for meeting and exchanging goods for many groups At present, tourists can walk or bike for sightseeing purposes along Thon Charoen Road, Chaimongkol Road, and Lak Muang Road. This place also contains the heritage of architecture and culture. Some of the old Chinese wooden row houses (Figure 1) alongside the Rim Klong Market, the old town, have been partially abandoned, put up for rent, or adapted to be guesthouses or boutique hotels. Besides, there is a 3-story building with a sloped hip roof called "Residence Kampot" (Figure 2) that was used as the governor's house in the period when the French Troop ruled Trat.

Figure 1 The old Chinese wooden row houses' style

Figure 2 Residence Kampot

From the data of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2018), Trat office, and the survey, Trat's old town has many other interesting cultural and historical sites worth enough to visit. Nonetheless, there is no publicity in various forms such as maps or brochures to be used as a travel guide by tourists. According to the researcher's actual web browsing and field trip in Trat town, information from the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Trat branch, and interviews with the locals--Rak Klong Bang Phra Community leader, hostel owners, and Trat Museum's curator-- in short, it was found that the bus route map at the bus stop provided by the Trat Provincial Transport Office was the only navigation information source provided for tourists. Thus, one of the guesthouses' owners, whose guesthouse is open to foreign elderly tourists, decided to draw a temporary tourist map and provide a copy for his guests. For this reason, the Trat's old town receives less attention from tourists than any other island in the province. The creation of the Cultural Tourism Map is necessary since the cultural map can communicate the being and identity of the community. The tourists will be able to admire and understand the places' background. In particular, this cultural tourism map can navigate the tourists directly to their destination. Thus, the public participation process will be an important tool to discover the identity of this community before the design process of the cultural tourism map for Trat's old town begins and is carried out through the end.

Trat province borders Cambodia by land and sea and is away from Bangkok by around 315 km (The Trat Provincial Office, 2012). Trat has a long history with the mixing of 5 original races: Thai, Chinese, Muslim, Vietnamese, and Chong (Museum Thailand, 2020; The Fine Arts Department, 1999). In the reign of King Prasat Thong of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya, Trat was formerly known as Muang Thung Yai. Due to its strategic location, Trat plays an important role in the country's stability and economy. The town of Trat later became a community of Chinese merchants. In 1767, Trat served as a checkpoint and buffer city and was responsible for providing provisions to King Taksin the Great before moving his navy from Chanthaburi to Ayutthaya, in which he expelled the Burmese and liberated the Kingdom from Burmese rule later on (Koh Chang Island Guide, 2019).

Rak Klong Bangpra or Trat's old town community, located along the Bang Phra Canal, is under the rule of the Muang Trat municipality. It has been the original town center since the reign of King Rama I until King Rama V. The area still has a rich architectural heritage that the community has agreed to preserve and restore. The old wooden rows of shophouses are in Chinese style. The front of the house is a folding door and roofing with kite tiles. They are linked by one of the main transportation routes in the period, which is the Bang Phra Canal. This canal is a shipping route to the sea via the Trat river. After the era of land transport, the first approach of Sukhumvit Road (Highway number 3) to the city caused the old town of Trat to reduce its importance. Apart from the Chinese wooden row houses' style, there are other architectural attractions and some important areas, which are the city's components and 3 kinds of landmarks (Lynch, 1960; Sorrows & Hirtle, 1999) such as

1) Cognitive landmarks: Cultural significance or personal significance
2) Visual landmarks: The distinguishing features of a building, such as color, shape, and so on
3) Structural landmarks: The building is located in an area that is the deciding point for tourists during a trip, such as a junction and public transport

These 3 kinds of landmarks should be included in the map to help the tourists understand the nature of the place or reflect their interests in the cognitive landmark. The tourists will use the visual and structural landmarks to navigate themselves to the destinations with additional context on the map. It is useful for tourists to travel in an unfamiliar area (Deakin, 1996; Michon & Denis, 2001). The classification of the tourist attractions within the Trat's old town area by the landmarks and city components is as follows:

Table 1 Tourist attractions within the Trat's old town area (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018) classified by the landmarks and city components

Landmarks			City components
Cognitive Landmarks	**Visual landmarks**	**Structural landmarks**	**Nodes, Edges**
Cultural and Traditional Tourism	**Historical Tourism**	**Other Tourism**	
- Buppharam Temple - Yotha Nimit Temple - Trat City Pillar Shrine - Phai Lom Temple	- Residanggamport Residence - Archaeological Landmark - Trat Museum	- City Hall - Rak Klong Bangphra Community Enterprise Center - Tha Ruea Chang Community Enterprise Center	- Public Park - Tha Ruea Chang Waterfront Plaza - Reservoir

The classification of the tourist attractions within the city that are unfamiliar for the first-time tourists (Grabler et al., 2008) should be presented on the map to help them travel to those places easier by using illustrations representing the places, other maps, and the city's components. Therefore, the public participation process is used in the creation of the Cultural Tourism Map.

Public participation is the process by which the interested or affected public is involved in planning decision-making. This process is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process (International Association for public participation, 2007; Creighton, 2005). The process (IGI Global, 2008) by which an organization consults with interested or affected individuals, organizations, and government entities before making a decision. Public participation is two-way communication and collaborative problem solving to achieve better and more acceptable decisions. Moreover, there are different forms of Public Participation (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2017) that might take place depending on the potential for public influence on a decision. These forms include:

- **Informing**: the public by providing information to help them understand the issues, options, and solutions
- **Consulting** with the public to obtain their feedback on alternatives or decisions
- **Involving**: the public to ensure their concerns will be considered throughout the decision process, particularly in the development of decision criteria and options

- **Collaborating** with the public to develop decision criteria and alternatives and identify the preferred solution
- **Empowering** the public by placing final decision-making authority in their hands

2. Objectives

1) To find out the identity of the town for designing the mascot to initiate the theme of the cultural tourism map for Trat's old town through the public participation process

2) To design the cultural tourism map for old Trat's town through the public participation process

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology for exploring the identity of Trat's old town to create the cultural tourism map consists of:

1) Review literature on the following issues:
- History of Trat's old town community
- Tourist attractions
- Trat's culture and identities
- The making of leaflets and other components of the tourism map

2) Interview the community and analyze data to be presented on the map; tourist attractions, city highlights, information, or other components of the city

3) Public participation is the theory applied to improve a sense of neighborhood identity in the long run for community-based projects (Haeberle, 1987). This research uses many kinds of large public participation and mini-focus groups, which consist of fewer participants – usually four or five – to create a more intimate group. (Corporate Finance Institute, n.d.) The steps to design and finalize the community's identity through the public participation process are as follows:

- Mascot: designed and finalized by the community through voting.
- Color scheme: The color scheme was created and finalized during the community interview.
- The cover of the map: The map's cover was designed and finalized by the community interview.
- The scheme of the map's illustration: designed and finalized by the community interview
- The maps' usability, namely size and folding method: It was designed and finalized by the focus group interview. The 12 focus group samplings are comprised of the target users of this cultural map, which are Thai and foreign tourists in different age ranges and genders, divided into 6 groups as follows:

Table 2 The sampling classifications

Thai	Foreigner		
		Youth	**Group 1:** Male aged 18 - 35 years old
			Group 2: Female aged 18 - 35 years old
		Middle-aged	**Group 3:** Male aged 36 - 55 years old
			Group 4: Female aged 36 - 55 years old
		Aging people	**Group 5:** Male aged 55 years old
			Group 6: Female aged older than 55 years old

4. Verify the map by Rak Klong Bang Phra Community representatives, residents, and local academicians

4. Results

The objective is to discover the identity of the town. To design the cultural tourism map for Trat's old town, the researchers have integrated the public participation process into the creation of the cultural tourism map as follows:

4.1 The Mascot creation represents the identity of Trat's old town

In today's rapidly developing economy, many businesses are seeking innovative ways to connect with their customers. While some of them are still attached to traditional methods of advertising or social

media advertising methods such as Twitter and YouTube, although these methods are effective in humanizing their company, there is another trend able to humanize the brand and relate to customers friendly by representing characters who serve as mascots for businesses (Gosha, 2012).

The original meaning of the word "Mascot" is a lucky item, generally, and using animals, people, or objects to represent itself. However, in the current context, the word "Mascot" is used to represent the groups such as sports teams, school teams, professional teams, and others. Besides, Mascot is also used as a brand representative. The mascot is one of the branding tools for marketing and can attract customers by helping them remember the brand faster. Therefore, the factors of the mascot's creation or design are that it must be attractive, easily recognizable, and present the business or brand (Naghdi, n.d.).

The mascot creation needs more time to explore its own business or brand perspective, both from the perspective of the designer and the organization (Maxine, 2018). In this study, the organization is Rak Klong Bang Phra Community. The final result of the study may differ from the origin of the designer's perspective because the use of the public participation process allows the community to create their mascot. In the designer's perspective, some initial ideas from the research, survey, and interviews with the stakeholders in Trat's old town community are kind-age people, coconuts, The Red Elephant Flag, Thai-Chinese relationship, Rufous-necked Hornbill, The five ancient races, ancient timber houses, Chinese junk, ancient agricultural hats, and the farmer and the fisherman. The first public hearing selected the initial ideas to be the schematic design for the part of the public participation process, which is the opportunity for the community members and stakeholders to officially consider which mascot is able to communicate as a community presenter directly. There are 3 mascots as follows:

Table 3 The 3 representative mascots of the community and will be selected by the public hearing

The happy grandmother and grandfather	The 5 races friend	Thai-Chinese brotherhood
This mascot represents the majority population in the community; the senior citizens. They are friendly, generous, and kind to welcome every tourist, including aged tourists to support the aging society in the future.	Thai, Chinese, Muslim, Vietnamese, and Chong, the 5 original races in Trat province, are welcoming tourists to have a good time and gain knowledge about Trat.	Thai and Chinese have had a close relationship since the city's establishment until the present. This mascot represents the architecture mixed between Thai and Chinese styles that can be found in many tourist attractions in this old town.

To prepare the public participation process and to get the opinion of the community's members and stakeholders about choosing the representing mascot of the community, the researchers had cooperated with Mr. Vinit Nirunpanich, the community's leader, and Mr. Roongrote Sawangkarn, Trat Museum's curator. This public hearing comprised 4 participant groups as follows:
1) Muang Trat municipality representatives
2) Rak Klong Bang Phra, the community representative, and the residents
3) Village health volunteer representatives
4) Representatives from the Senior Society Club

100 participants are voting and giving their comments for this public hearing. The result is as follows:
1) The happy grandmother and grandfather representative got 80%.
2) The 5 races friend got 12%.

3) Thai-Chinese brotherhood got 8%.

Thus, the best-representing mascot of the community is "***The happy grandmother and grandfather***" in casual character representing the majority population in the community; the senior citizens. Once, the participants admitted that this mascot was primarily for them, the researcher will design the other components, the mood, and tone of the cultural map to fit with that mascot's character.

4.2 The map's color scheme

The color of the map should blend well with the wood color of old buildings in Trat's old town to create friendly hospitality. Thus, the map used green, brown, and beige (Figure 3).
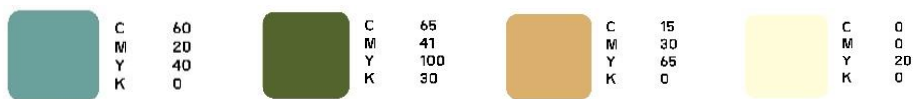

C	60
M	20
Y	40
K	0

C	65
M	41
Y	100
K	30

C	15
M	30
Y	65
K	0

C	0
M	0
Y	20
K	0

Figure 3 The map's color scheme

4.3 The cover of the map

The map's cover shows the picture of the happy grandmother and grandfather welcoming and introducing tourists to each destination and delicious foods better than other mascots (Figure 4), while a frame uses a classic decorative pattern to separate or enhance the information.
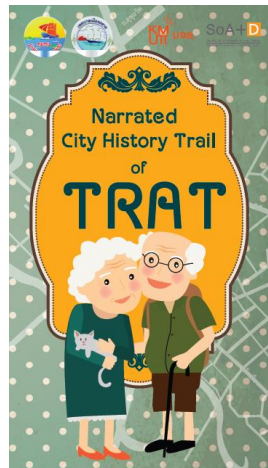
Figure 4 The map's cover

4.4 The scheme of the map's illustration

The visual of the data presented is an Orthographic View and a 3D View with an Oblique projection. Because the buildings' size and shape do not depend on the distance to the point of view and it can compare the size and area of the building. Furthermore, this scheme helps the users to easily understand the street network and recognize the buildings.

There is an advantage of the size and shape of the buildings that do not depend on the distance to the point of view, which helps to compare building sizes and areas to increase understanding of road network patterns and the specific characteristics of the building (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Orthographic View and 3-D View with Oblique Projection in the map

4.5 The map's size and folding

Paper size "A3" is suitable for use and is portable. Also, A3 is one of the standard paper sizes, so it is not expensive in terms of preparation and can be folded in various forms (Infinity Color Printing Co., Ltd., 2018).

The 5-fold leaflet was derived from the focus group interview of the sampling. The selected samplings regarding the target users of this cultural map are Thai and foreign tourists. They are divided into 6 groups by the age ranges of both males and females: youth (18-35 years old), middle-aged (36-55 years old), and aging people (older than 55 years old). There are 3 kinds of leaflet folding to choose from: 3-fold leaflet, 4-fold leaflet, and 5-fold leaflet. The result in Table 4 showed that 58% (7 voters) of the voters selected the 5-fold leaflet because it is the most compact and easiest to carry in a shirt pocket and the layout is suitable for the data classification and easy to read. The researcher agrees with these suggestions from the sample group since the research has attempted and obtained the same conclusion. Therefore, this research uses the 5-fold leaflet for the development of Trat's old town map (Figure 6).

Table 4 The result of leaflet folding selection

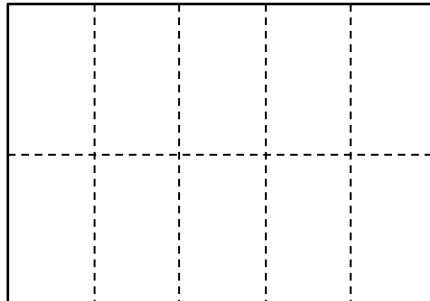|		Thai	foreigner
Youth	**Group 1:** Male aged 18 - 35 years old	**5-fold**	**5-fold**
	Group 2: Female aged 18 - 35 years old	**5-fold**	3-fold
Middle-aged	**Group 3:** Male aged 36 - 55 years old	4-fold	**5-fold**
	Group 4: Female aged 36 - 55 years old	**5-fold**	4-fold
Aging people	**Group 5:** Male aged 55 years old	3-fold	**5-fold**
	Group 6: Female aged older than 55 years old	**5-fold**	3-fold

Figure 6 the 5-fold leaflet

The fully designed map began after the researchers had completed every map's component. Then, the community representative and local academic needed to recheck information on the map before the process of the map presentations, which were participated in by Rak Klong Bang Phra community members and stakeholders.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Since the community should know their areas and requirements, every public project should include a public participation process to gain opinions from the community members and stakeholders. As well as this research, the identity and the usability of the map finding process emphasizes community participation. The result shows that the public participation process is effective for sorting out the authentic identity of the Rak Klong Bang Phra Community. Furthermore, the public participation can apply to determine the usability of this cultural Trat's old town map by the target users as shown in the diagram (Figure 7).
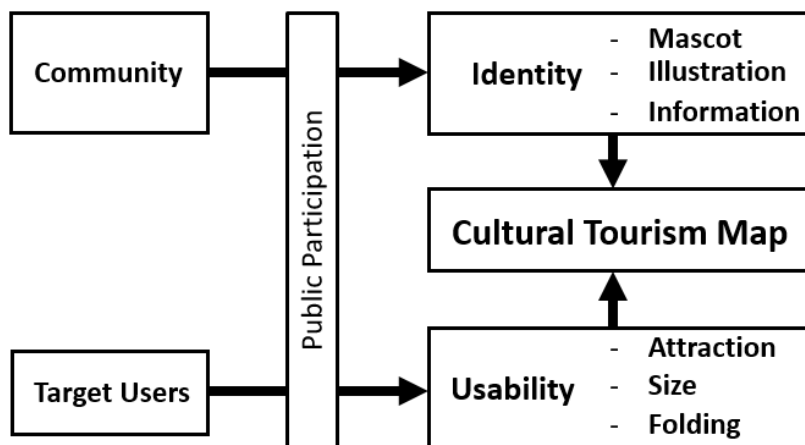
Figure 7 The use of public participation processes from the community to determine the identity and usability of the Cultural Tourism Map

Rak Klong Bang Phra Community's identity is represented through the warmth, friendliness of the design scheme. The color of the map should blend well with the wood color of old buildings in Trat's old town to create friendly hospitality. Thus, green, brown, and beige are used in the map. The participation process results in Trat's selected mascots of "the happy grandmother and grandfather" in casual character representing the majority population in the community--the senior citizens. The mascots are welcoming and introducing tourists to each destination and delicious foods and a frame needed to separate or enhance the information used a classic decorative pattern (Figure 8).

Figure 8 The first draft of the map's cover, and body

The conclusion of all processes in this study is as follows:

Table 5 The creation issues, the target group of public participation processes, and the results of the study

Content	Methodology	Target group	Output	Impact	Outcome
Map Design: Identity					
Mascot	Public Participation: Voting	Community	The happy grandmother and grandfather	The tourists perceive the true community's identity	The identity transmitted on the map corresponds to what the community have been
Illustration	Public Participation: Interview	Community	Oblique projection		
Information	Public Participation: Interview	Community	Necessary information from the community to be presented		
Map Use: Usability					
Attraction	Mill & Morrison	Tourist Groups	Necessary information for the tourists	The map is full of the necessary information for the tourists	The efficiency of the map use
Size	Public Participation: Interview	Tourist Groups	Paper Standard: A3	- Convenient to use and portable - Cheap	
Folding	Public Participation: Interview	Tourist Groups	5-fold leaflet	- The most compact - The layout is suitable for the data classification and easy to read - Easy to carry on	

The creation of the cultural tourism map is a part of attracting tourists to this Trat's old town community. The map should be available in two versions, a hardcopy and online that is uploaded to a digital platform to conveniently update information in the future. Therefore, the map can serve those who prefer digital platforms and those who are not familiar with technology and the restriction of telephone screen size. An attractive cultural tourism map can be one of the opportunities to revive the community's economy by

tourism. If the community residents realize that the community's character is valuable, community preservation will be taken into account as the community's issue.

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